

Good morning, and welcome to a presentation on Loudoun County Public Schools as part of the EDC's "Outcomes" series.

As we approach graduation season – the ultimate outcome of public education – it's only natural that we think about outcomes and the factors that go into them.



Loudoun County Public Schools

***"Outcomes"***



**Loudoun County  
Economic Development  
Commission**

May 7, 2010

When I talk about the extraordinary outcomes our schools have achieved, I do so against the backdrop of the worst economy America has seen since the 1930's.

Yesterday's Washington Post gave the results of a 45-state survey done by American Association of School Administrators, which showed that many school districts nationwide have taken drastic measures – such as cutting summer school and raising class size – and these are measures we have taken.

It also showed that many had cut curriculum and drastically altered the school calendar, which we have not. It's the measures we have not taken, measures that directly affect students in the classroom, that have led to the outcomes I'll be sharing with you this morning.



## Effects of Recession on Education


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- 33 percent of districts eliminating summer school
- 14 percent considering four-day week
- 62 percent are raising class size
- 60 percent of New Jersey schools cutting class offerings

*The Washington Post*

Last year, 93.6 percent of our seniors graduated on-time. That's 10.4 percent higher than the statewide average. Of the 3,534 graduates, 68 percent received an Advanced Studies diploma, 18 percent above the state average.

The Class of 2009 received more than \$20.6 million in scholarships, 8 percent more than the Class of 2008.







## Graduation Statistics

### 2009 Percentage of Seniors that Graduated On Time

➤ LCPS	93 percent	★
➤ Virginia	83.2 percent	

**\$20.6 million in scholarships**




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Beyond the overall graduation rate, Loudoun topped the state averages in nine ethnic and socio-economic categories. This outcome shows that our schools have taken the original philosophy of “No Child Left Behind” to heart.

It also shows that, while we haven’t closed the achievement gap between various ethnic and socio-economic groups, we have made significant progress in this department.

I would note that the difference in on-time graduation rates between white and African-American students in Loudoun is 3.8 percent as opposed to 11.3 percent statewide.





## Closing the Achievement Gap

**Graduation Rates:**

- **Female:**  
95.5%, 9.1% above state.
- **Male:**  
91.9%, 11.7% above state.
- **African-Americans:**  
92.5%, 16.8% above state.
- **Hispanics:**  
79.4%, 7.1% above state.
- **White:**  
96.3%, 9.3% above state.
- **Asian:**  
96.3%, 3% above state.

- **Students with Disabilities:**  
94.5%, 12% above state.
- **Disadvantaged students:**  
86.5% rate, 13.3% above state.
- **Limited English proficiency:**  
73%, 4.2% above state.



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Our above-average graduation statistics result from an above-average curriculum that demands that students put a superior effort into their education.

Our emphasis on Advanced Placement courses has led to graduating seniors who are prepared, not only to handle a college-level curriculum, but to excel at the college level.



## A Rigorous Curriculum

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- 5,447 students took one or more Advanced Placement (AP) classes in 2008-2009
- 9,842 AP exams were administered
- 52.8 percent of the scores were 3 or higher on the exams



School support staff are crucial to the academic achievement I've just outlined. Students come to us at all stages of readiness to learn and sometimes with problems, developmentally, emotionally and physically, that must be addressed before they can learn.

Support staff come in for the heaviest criticism at budget time but, without them, we would not be seeing the overwhelmingly positive academic outcomes that are expected in Loudoun.



## Strategic Interventions

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- Limited English Proficiency
- Reading Resource
- Math specialists
- Elementary & Middle School Guidance Counselors
- School psychologists & social workers



Our special education program, which begins pre-school and goes beyond traditional graduation age in some cases, also has produced results that far exceed state and national averages.

We graduate more students with disabilities, with a higher level of diploma, and we see more of them make a successful transition to the work force and higher education.




## Student with Disabilities Not Left Behind

- **94 percent of students** with disabilities completed high school on time (82 percent statewide).
- **74 percent of these students** graduate with a standard or advanced diploma (45 percent statewide).
- **95 percent of students** with disabilities go on for post-secondary employment, training or education (69 percent nationwide).






Our academic success also has reached secondary students who traditionally have not succeeded academically. Douglass School has created an atmosphere where students who have not succeeded in the past want to be and, more importantly, want to be successful.

This was recognized last month when Rhonda Alley, an English teacher at Douglass, was named our Washington Post Agnes Meyer Teacher of the Year.



## Alternative Education

- 88 to 92 percent of Douglass students have attained passing grades for eight consecutive years
- 10 percent had perfect attendance in 2008-2009
- 90 percent involved in extracurricular activities



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Recent outside honors have confirmed that LCPS is viewed as a state and national leader in education. In January, we were one of 15 school divisions in Virginia, out of 132, to receive the state Board of Education's Excellence Award.

Forty-nine of our schools were honored by the state board for academic excellence. The nine you see here received the Governor's Award for Educational Excellence. Only 153 schools received this award statewide.



## LCPS Wins Virginia Board of Education Excellence Award

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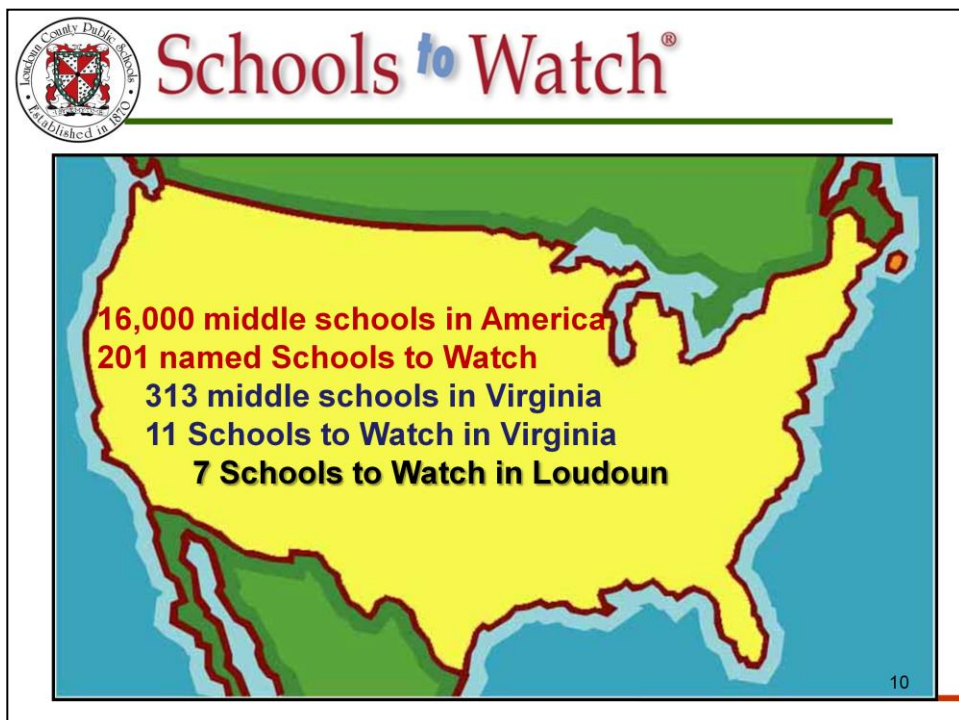
### 9 Schools Receive Governor's Award for Educational Excellence:

- Ashburn Elementary
- Belmont Ridge Middle School
- Belmont Station Elementary
- Eagle Ridge Middle School
- Lincoln Elementary
- Lowes Island Elementary
- Pinebrook Elementary
- Sanders Corner Elementary
- Waterford Elementary



Harper Park and River Bend middle schools are the latest Loudoun middle schools honored by the Schools to Watch® initiative launched by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform in 1999.

As you can see from the statistics on this slide, this is a rare distinction. Schools to Watch are held up as national models of what middle school education should be.



At 2 p.m. today and again at 2 p.m. next Friday, River Bend and Harper Park middle schools, respectively, will have celebrations for being named the newest Schools to Watch.

I'd invite you to attend these celebrations to see the enthusiasm and spirit generated by middle-schoolers. I'll warn you ahead of time to expect confetti and silly string.

Becoming a School to Watch requires the teamwork and dedication of students, teachers and parents. Our Schools to Watch have become a national model for middle school education.



In addition, five of our middle schools were recognized by Johns Hopkins University as being among the top 100 in Virginia.

I recently heard a speaker say that “people will do things for recognition that they won’t do for money.” Our teachers and support staff have proven they will go above and beyond to be recognized as among the best in the state and nation.



## Johns Hopkins University Talent Search

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- Eagle Ridge Middle School
- Mercer Middle School
- River Bend Middle School
- Smart's Mill Middle School
- Stone Hill Middle School



The woman leading the dancing here is Park View Principal Ginger Minshew. The reason she's dancing is because Park View was named one of five high schools nationwide as a "Breakthrough School" by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The song she's dancing to is the Black-Eyed Peas "I've got a feeling."

My staff will tell you that my tastes in popular music ended with the New Christie Minstrels, but I do know about the feeling and passion that Ginger has put into her school. She and her staff have re-made a school culture to fit a changing student population and to make that population successful by any objective measurement.



## Breakthrough School





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Beyond earning accolades and plaques to be proudly displayed, these awards show that we have made our schools places where students want to be, which is reflected in our attendance rate, one of the highest in Virginia, and our dropout rate, one of the lowest.



## Attendance Rate Among Best in State

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- 96 percent attendance in 2008-2009 school year
- 0.62 percent dropout rate
- 1.76 percent in state





Our national recognitions have stretched beyond the classroom. In March, Loudoun was one of two school divisions in America to be named an ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year by the EPA.

This is the highest award the federal government bestows in recognition of energy conservation and efficiency. In all, there were 40 Partner of the Year Award winners selected from more than 17,000 organizations participating in the ENERGY STAR program.

We've partnered with Energy Education, an energy-management firm, since 1993. Through this partnership the school system has generated a savings of more than \$35 million.



## EPA Energy Star Awards



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Here's what that \$35 million means in terms of paying our staff, educating our students and preparing for the future.



## \$35 Million would pay for:



- 585 teachers for a year;
- 2,917 students for a year;
- The cost of building J. Michael Lunsford Middle School



Beyond the monetary savings, our Energy Education program teaches students a green lifestyle, which is crucial to their future stewardship of this planet.

I want to switch gears a bit here and talk about some of the less-tangible and more-surprising outcomes that have come from our school programs.

As impressive as the honors and measurable outcomes are, they mean nothing if we don't connect with each student. We want to instill in them a love for learning and a passion for changing the world for the better with their education.



Here's a story about a very unexpected outcome: In the spring of 2005, I had lunch with Jay Lambert of the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation and J. Knox Singleton, the CEO of Inova Health System.

We talked about the need for training health care workers and sketched out on a napkin – this is a true story – the basics of what would become the Claude Moore Scholars program at Monroe Technology Center to train health care professionals.



## Claude Moore Scholars Program



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The Claude Moore Scholars Program began in 2008 with 29 students and a check from the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation for \$100,000.

We now have more than 200 students in this program and until we get a new Monroe Technology Center, it is effectively sold out.

This would be an incredible outcome if our “tale of the napkin” ended here. It doesn’t.



## Claude Moore Scholars



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On April 20<sup>th</sup> at the National Press Club, the Army Reserve's Military to Medicine program announced it would use the curriculum developed at Monroe Technology Center online to teach wounded veterans and their spouses about careers in medical technology.

This is certainly a dramatic, unseen outcome from a lunch in 2005; but not an unusual outcome when you consider the possible outcomes that education offers.



## National Press Club

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One of the most successful partnerships we've enjoyed is with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute or HHMI. It was this partnership that led to the formation of our Academy of Science and opened up contact to the highest levels of the scientific community for our students.

The two students with the trophies you see here are Ashoka Regendra, who was our first international science fair winner and Kalyn Jackson who, with the help of an astrophysicist from Johns Hopkins University, took part in the Space Olympics in Russia. Ashoka won a trip to Switzerland to study advanced technology through the AOS.



## Partnership with HHMI

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In 2001 we started the Foreign Language in Elementary School, or FLES, program, in 10 schools. Today, every student in grades one through six receives instruction in Spanish.

This is not an immersion program or an introduction to languages beyond Spanish. What we want this to be is an awakening for our students to the fact that the world does not communicate exclusively in English.

While this may seem like an undefinable outcome, we are seeing measurable results for those students who have been in FLES throughout their elementary career.

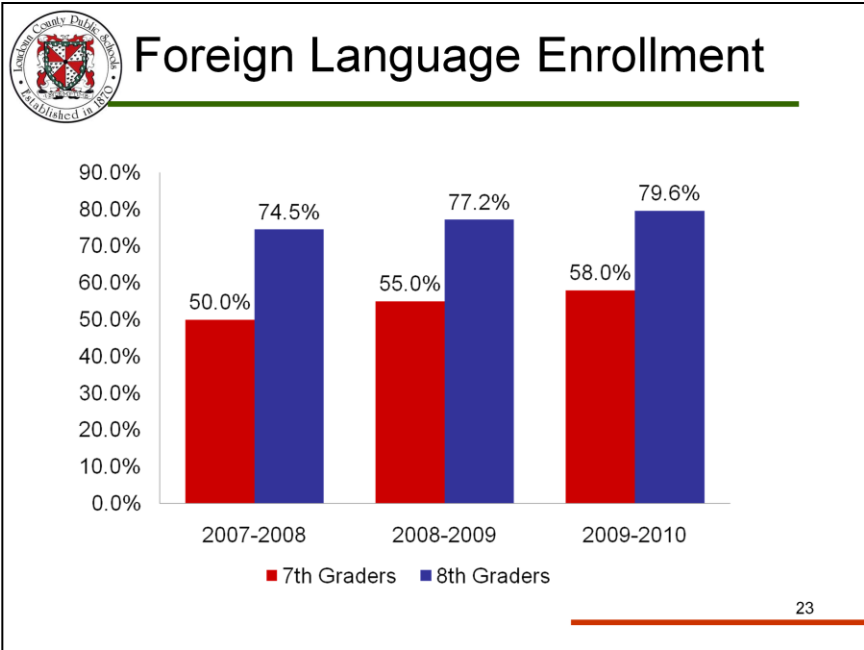


## Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES)



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Each year, we're seeing an increasing number of middle school students enrolling in foreign language courses; not only enrolling in Spanish classes, but French, German and Latin.



Not only are more middle school students enrolling in foreign language classes, but they're achieving at a higher level once they're in those classes as shown by these statistics.

In addition, a record 30 of our students will attend the Virginia Governor's Foreign Language Academies this summer, where they will study languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Arabic as well as Spanish, German, French and Latin.

Research tells us exposure to a foreign language at a young age, through the FLES program, plays more than a small part in these achievements.

And we also believe that learning a foreign language at a young age helps students overcome the fear of the unknown that sometimes limits their choices in math and science.



## Foreign Language Facts

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- 93 percent of seventh-graders earn an "A" or "B" in their foreign language.
- 89 percent of eighth-graders earn an "A" or "B" in their foreign language.
- 80 percent of ninth-graders earn an "A" or "B" in their foreign language.



Our international outlook goes beyond language instruction. This March, we accomplished what might have been a first: an exchange program between technical schools in Germany and the United States.

Twenty-one students from the Culinary Arts program at Monroe Technology Center visited Konrad Adenauer Schule in our sister county of Main-Taunus-Kreis, Germany.

I'll let some of our students tell you the meaning of this exchange.



## International Exchange Programs

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In the recent past we've had exchanges and educator visits involving China, Singapore, Germany, Scotland, Korea and Brazil.

We want our students to be exposed to world culture and we want them to enjoy sharing the initiatives we've spearheaded with educators from around the world. It's vital that we understand how we fit into the global economy.

The top 10 percent of the students in China and India now equal America's total student population. That is the world our students are entering and need to understand.



## International Exchange Programs





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One of the areas we've been trailblazers in is technology.

In 1993, Loudoun was the first school district in Virginia to create and staff the position of technology resource teacher, a position later added to the Virginia Standards of Quality.

In 1997, we passed a \$27 million bond referendum to fully equip and network all schools so that students had access to computers and the Internet.

In recent years, we've added interactive white boards to the majority of our classrooms.

We've taken some grief for investing in technology; but technology is second nature to our students and provides the tools through which they learn most effectively.



## Technology

- 1<sup>st</sup> in Virginia to employ technology resource teachers
- All schools fully equipped with computers in 1997



## If it's not interactive, it's ineffective.

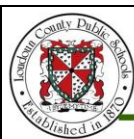
These students are working with Activote and ActivExpression interactive learning systems that some of our schools have purchased using funds raised by parent groups.

Instead of a teacher calling on one student to see if they know the answer, using these touch pads the teacher can see instantly who has, and who has not, grasped a concept.

Technology does not create a sterile, distant learning environment. It creates one that is different from the classrooms we knew.

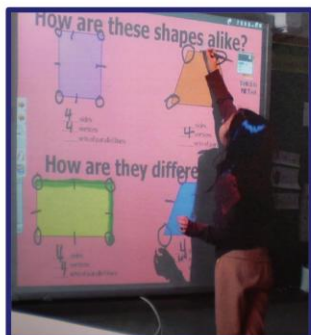
When Broad Run students visited their sister school, Nanjing School No. 12, in March, the Chinese teachers commented about how involved and inquisitive they were.

Today's students learn differently than we did.



## Interactive Learning

Kids today learn differently.



When I talk about interacting, the people students interact with most frequently are our staff. Staff costs make up 88 percent of our budget. At the end of the day, we're about people, not things, because it is our people who make the difference in our students' lives.


A particularly fruitful interaction is that between our guidance staff and our students.

The student on the left is Robert Jackson, our April student School Board member from Loudoun Valley High School with his guidance counselor, Charles Smith. Robert is the winner of a Gates Millennium Scholarship, which will pay for his entire education at Georgetown University. Charles has been the guidance counselor for all four of our students who have won a Gates scholarship. Guidance counselors are one of the areas we looked at cutting when we were reconciling our budget.

The man in the center is Kevin Terry, the guidance director at Dominion High School and a 1986 graduate of Park View High School. Last week, he was named the Virginia Guidance Counselor of the Year.




The young lady on the right is Eskedar Kabede, a graduate of Briar Woods High School. Last year, she used her platform as a student School Board member to praise her career center assistant, Janet Develli, whose position was on the cut list because of budget constraints.

We haven't cut our guidance staff and the outcome that has led to them being retained more than the state minimum is that 90 percent of our graduates go on to further education.



## Guidance Outcomes

- 90 percent of graduates go to further education
- 4 Gates millennium Scholars
- Virginia Guidance Counselor of the Year



Suggesting any staff members might have to lose their jobs was painful to me because you never know which staff member – a teacher, a principal, a coach, a custodian, a bus driver – is going to be the person who makes a connection with a student and gets that student to see the potential in themselves.

Fortunately, we were able to avoid firing employees because our employees agreed to take a two-day furlough – essentially a cut in pay – to ensure their colleagues' jobs.

For those who say we're overstaffed, I'd remind them that we'll be opening three new schools and enrolling 3,257 new students next year.

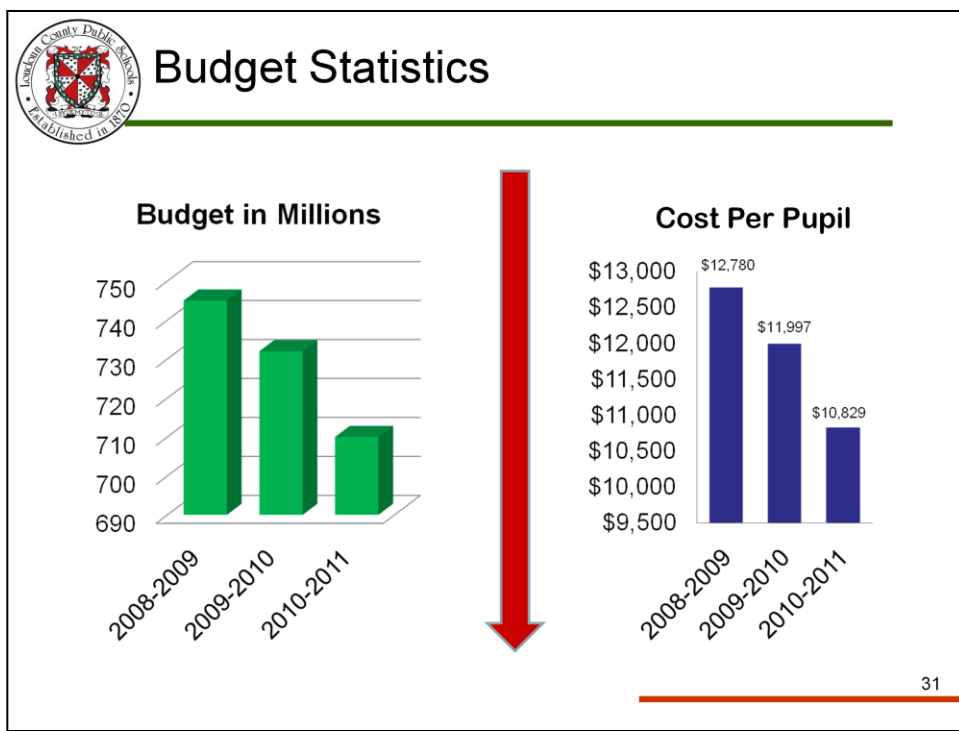


As we near the end of this presentation I'll talk about an outcome I hope we don't have to face, but which we will face if current funding trends continue. There are those who will look at the figures on this slide and say "Good, the schools are being forced to do more with less."

What these bottom-line advocates don't see is the tangible and intangible costs behind these figures. They don't see students' needs going unmet because school support personnel are overtaxed.

They don't see teachers leaving for better-paying jobs inside and outside the profession. They don't see buildings and equipment that are deteriorating because of inadequate maintenance.

What I fear is – that if this trend continues – we will have some very unfortunate outcomes to report in the not-too-distant future.





The economic conditions are not something we just awoke to. During the current fiscal year – realizing we had a tough budget ahead – we froze positions, deferred purchases and kept jobs open as long as possible to build up a 2 percent reserve that we could apply to next year's budget.

Unfortunately, this did not have the outcome that I would have wished or could have predicted.

Let me state here, for an audience that I'm sure could appreciate it, that Loudoun schools have never had, nor will ever have a "slush fund." What we have are dedicated budget managers who wring every positive outcome they can out of every taxpayer dollar.



## LCPS Efforts to Save Money

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- Freeze selected positions to assist with savings.
- Review each non-critical position before posting to determine if it could be held open longer.
- Defer purchases to ensure that the carryover estimate can be achieved.



During the last budget season, Supervisor Susan Buckley said that Loudoun had to make a decision as to whether it viewed its children as “assets” or “liabilities.”

I would welcome this debate and would want to throw into this mix the word “outcomes.” Economic conditions – good or bad – are temporary, but the future and the needs it will generate for today’s students are a constant.

Are we willing to have a rational, well-thought-out conversation that will guide us toward positive future outcomes? That’s the debate I’m seeking as we move forward and one that I welcome.

